

INTERNATIONAL CITY MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION
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CITY HALL LOCATION AND LAYOUT OF OFFICE SPACE

Where should the city hall be located and what factors should be considered in the arrangement and layout of office space?

The city hall in many cities, especially in those cities that have experienced rapid population growth, has become congested because of insufficient space to accommodate expanded services. Many other cities have outmoded city halls or old buildings which are costly to maintain. Some cities erected new city halls during the depression years with the help of PWA (or WPA) funds, but many cities which ordinarily would have built new city halls during the 1930's or during the time of the second world war have postponed such action. Finally, many city halls have become obsolete because of new activities adopted by city governments in the last 20 years--urban planning, fire prevention and inspection, public health, traffic engineering, etc. The city government reflects basic changes in the society it serves.

All these factors have resulted in increased interest in building new city halls and remodeling old buildings to meet the demand for expanded services. A new city hall should be properly located and planned so that it can be expanded or adapted to changing needs. The information in this report is based in part on information supplied by the officials of 34 cities which have built city halls during the past 20 years.

Steps to be taken in planning and constructing a city hall include: (1) the selection and acquisition of a site; (2) the determination of such policies as the type of construction, the activities to be housed in the city hall, the number of floors, location of individual departments, and location of the chief administrator's office; and (3) the final layout of departmental areas.

The architect should be consulted throughout these three steps together with other consultants who can give advice on special problems. The city planning director should be called on for advice in selection of a site. He is the person with the best knowledge of probable future growth, and he should have a good understanding of future community needs. Legal and financial advice also will be needed in planning the building.

The subject matter of this report may be summarized in part by listing some "Do's" and "Don't's" for the guidance of city officials:

DO:

1. Locate the city hall where it will be most convenient and if possible where land values are reasonable.
2. Be prepared to provide the architect with information on departments to be housed, the number of employees, type of furnishings and special equipment, and any special requirements such as vault and storage space.
3. Provide ample off-street parking space for both employees and the public.

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4. Put most or all city department headquarters in the city hall.
5. Provide for structural expansion and flexibility in office layout.
6. Plan the city hall from the inside out with emphasis on work flow, convenience to the public, and convenience for employees.
7. Provide for the comfort and efficiency of employees with controlled ventilation and adequate lighting.
8. Provide for employee lounges and rest rooms.
9. Use materials, construction, and furnishings which make the city hall easy to maintain.
10. Provide open unobstructed counters for transactions with the public.

DON'T:

1. Don't locate in an area of declining property values.
2. Don't try to remodel an old postoffice, school building, convention hall, or other building designed for some other special use.
3. Don't forget that the city hall is an office building, not a monument or an ornament.
4. Don't underestimate space needs; the average commercial office building lasts 67 years.
5. Don't tie up valuable space with indoor pistol ranges, drive-through garages, private exits, wide corridors, and other gadgets.
6. Don't cut up the city hall into cubby holes for minor officials.
7. Don't build the city hall over two stories in height if at all possible.
8. Don't let the public come in contact with police or criminal activities.
9. Don't provide in the main lobby any facilities, such as a cigar and soft drink stand, which encourage loitering.

Selecting the Location of the City Hall

The needs of the public and of those who work in the city hall should be considered in the selection of a site. Environmental features, costs of acquisition and development, and accessibility are the main factors influencing location. Most sites will not meet all of these requirements, but possible locations should be considered in the light of these factors and the decision made accordingly.

Environment. In most cases the city hall should be located near but not in the central business district. It should be near any existing public buildings which have close relationship to the activities housed in the new building. The location of an existing permanent police or courts building, for example, is an important consideration in the selection of the city hall site. Since accessibility is important a site in the immediate vicinity of the central business district should be selected. But if the business district is not the most accessible location, the city hall may be located elsewhere. In Richmond, Calif., and Saginaw, Mich., for example, it is one mile from the business district. In a recent "advisory" referendum, citizens of San Jose, Calif., voted to build a civic center two miles north of the central business district.

Most of the 34 cities surveyed built their city halls within two to three blocks of the central business district. In most cases the actual location was determined largely by the availability of vacant land, city ownership of the site, or a relatively low acquisition cost coupled with satisfactory environmental features. In some instances the new building was located on the site of the old one. City halls in 13 cities are in civic centers: Boulder, Colo., Chula Vista, Richmond, and Santa Monica, Calif., Council Bluffs, Ia., Cranston, R. I., Kalamazoo, Mich., Kansas City, Mo., Mineral Wells, Sherman, Tyler, and Uvalde, Tex.; and West Hartford, Conn.

The available site also should be analyzed from the standpoint of possible future use of the site, its surroundings, and special features: (1) The city hall should be the best possible use of a particular location and should not pre-empt an area likely to be used in future expansion of the business district. (2) The city hall should be located in an area where surrounding buildings complement rather than detract from it. On the other hand, the effect of the city hall on the existing buildings should also be considered. The trend in the character of the locale should be satisfactory to the new city hall; for example, an area which is rapidly declining in value and appearance may make a poor location for a new public building. (3) Parks and other open places are attractive sites since they are less costly to develop and contribute a setting for the city hall. (4) The site should be of sufficient size to allow landscaping and room for expansion.

Property and Development Costs. Demolition, grading, foundations and footings, and flood protection make up development costs. High acquisition costs may eliminate from consideration areas where land prices are too high. Sites where existing buildings have a long remaining usefulness will be higher priced and should be avoided if possible. Title I of the National Housing Act of 1949 provides federal government financial aid in clearing land for a public use, including city halls and civic centers. The land to be cleared must be a blighted area.

Accessibility. The convenience of both the general public and the personnel working in the building is important. The city hall must be accessible to pedestrians, motorists, and service vehicles. The city hall should be near public transit, parking areas, and the shopping district. Off-street parking for both the general public and for employees should be near by. City trucks, official cars, and commercial service vehicles must have convenient access to the city hall.

Provision for public off-street parking was made by 15 of the 34 cities surveyed. City employees in 12 of these cities use the public lots for parking their cars. In five cities separate private lots are provided for employees' cars and several cities reserve space for official vehicles. The number of parking spaces varies from 12 in Grand Haven, Mich., to 431 in Richmond, Calif. Three other cities provide 100 or more spaces: Medford, Ore. (150), Santa Monica, Calif. (300), and West Hartford, Conn. (100). The Boulder, Colo., city hall adjoins an area planned to provide off-street parking for 1,000 cars. The area will serve the central business district as well as the city hall.

Location in a Civic Center. Administrative-service buildings (city hall, county building, state and federal office buildings, and court buildings) and assembly-exhibition buildings (auditorium, exposition hall, stadium, etc.) are most often included in a civic center. Several benefits and economies may result from such a grouping of public buildings. The buildings gain attractiveness from being part of an harmonious design. The surroundings are less likely to deteriorate if a large area is developed. Complete area redevelopment may be possible for a civic center though not for a single building. The grouping of public buildings would make possible the joint use of an information bureau, research library, central heating, access roads, and parking facilities, and thus result in economies in total site requirements and reduce duplication of effort. The public is provided the conveniences of one-stop service to obtain licenses, records, etc. which may require visits to several buildings and offices. Savings in time are possible where inter-building contacts are frequent and necessary to day-to-day operations. A well-planned, well-located civic center can help stabilize the central business district by increasing or protecting property values and can be a source of pride to the community. But it may not be feasible to develop a civic center if most agencies are adequately housed. The lack of available land suitable from the stand-point of location, size, and cost may make a civic center impracticable.

Most of the factors involved in the selection of a site for a separate city hall apply also to civic centers. In addition, the site for a civic center must permit flexibility in building arrangement. Since more land is necessary, street patterns may have to be altered and additional parking areas provided. The acquisition and development of a civic center may present special legal and financial problems. For example, a site requiring complete redevelopment presents at the beginning the problem of large-scale acquisition of property. Once the area is acquired, cleared, and planned, the problem of availability of a site is solved. On the other hand, the acquisition of land as each unit is constructed raises the problem of preserving the site area for gradual development.

Richmond, Calif., offers an interesting deviation from the practice of locating the city hall near the central business district. Its newly-built city hall is located in a civic center nearly a mile from the business district. The location is only one block from the main thoroughfare serving the business district which is expanding in the direction of the new civic center. Land costs in the area selected were substantially lower than those in areas adjacent to the business district. The selection of a residential area made possible the blocking of streets to provide sufficient space. Already built are a city hall, city auditorium, justice building, and library.

City-County Buildings. Office buildings are shared by city and county governments in at least 35 communities. Convenience to the public and economies due to joint usage of facilities are the main advantages. Buildings may be owned jointly or one agency may rent to the other. Joint ownership of the building is the arrangement used by 15 of the cities. Plans for occupation, maintenance, repairs, and financing should be clearly defined. In several instances a joint committee manages the building. Administration and heating costs are shared equally and other expenses are charged directly to the using agency. One agency is tenant of the other in the remaining cases. Among the cities that are now developing plans for joint city-county buildings are: Detroit and Wayne County, Mich.; Wheeling and Ohio County, W. Va.; Pontiac and Oakland County, Mich.; Madison and Dane County, Wis.; and the city and county of Fond du Lac, Wis.

Design and Architectural Features

The city hall is essentially an office building and not a monument or an ornament. It should be attractive and functional but without excessive ornamentation. The building should be conveniently and efficiently arranged from the standpoint of those who use it. It should adequately provide a headquarters for municipal activities. The new city hall should be expandable horizontally and flexible in internal arrangement. The building should be designed from the inside out so that adequate space and convenient arrangement control the design rather than strict adherence to an architectural style. The building should reflect its function and structure.

The building should be economical in construction and maintenance. True long-range economy is achieved by a judicious balance between original cost and maintenance cost. A building with cheap materials and equipment for the sake of low first cost may be quite expensive in maintenance and replacement.

Room for expansion is important in planning the new building. Many city halls built in the last 20 years were made inadequate because of tremendous and unforeseen increases in population and services. While it is impossible to give a general formula for space requirements, there are several ways of planning for expanded services and changes in the relative importance of different services.

1. The structure should provide for horizontal expansion. It is cheaper to extend and cap air ducts, utility connections, and electrical wiring to service the extension as the building is being built. Extra land area should be provided for horizontal expansion.

2. The use of some uniform, removable partitions instead of interior walls will give the building greater flexibility to meet changing needs. Departmental areas may be enclosed in permanent walls (as in Fresno) to provide better sound-proof separation, but private offices, divisional areas, and conference rooms should be separated by removable wood, steel, or steel and glass partitions. In Boulder a combination of movable steel partitions and modular furniture, with partitions attached, is used.

3. Allowance of "elbow room" in departmental work areas will provide for additional employees. Napa, Calif., planned its building to meet the needs of double its present city hall staff. Kansas City, Mo., built a larger structure than needed and rented out unneeded space to the federal government.

The height of the building will depend upon the amount of ground available and the amount of office space needed. Land generally is cheaper than additional height. Taller buildings are more difficult to maintain and require more planning of the interior to get related functions on adjacent floors. Then, too, any city building of more than two floors should have an elevator, especially if the public has any great use of the top floor. In Fresno, where the original plan called for three floors, it was found that by purchasing additional land a two-story building could be built more economically. The larger floor area allowed related functions to be located adjacent to one another.

Internal Construction Features. Modern buildings have several outstanding features which make them safer, cheaper to build, and easier to maintain. Wood ceiling moldings, door frames, and base boards are being eliminated. Window area has increased and windows are hung so that they can be cleaned from inside the building. Floor coverings of asphalt or rubber tile and cork simplify the cleaning problems and afford more use of color as well as provide cheaper and more attractive floors. Corridors are waste space and the modern building is so arranged that they are used sparingly.

Color is an important feature of modern buildings. Efficiency can be increased and fatigue reduced by proper use of color in offices and general work areas. A flat finish is better than a gloss since it presents a pleasing appearance and does not strain eyes. Colors which relieve glare and reduce contrasts are best for walls, ceilings, floors, and also for desks and office furniture. Dark, pure, and extremely bright colors should be avoided in offices, although they can be very effective for lobbies, stair wells, and other public areas. In areas where bookkeeping, drafting, or machine operations are being performed the cool tones of green and blue-green should be selected. Where more active work is done or where there is little natural light, warmer tones of peach, tan, and rose can be used. Colors chosen should reflect from 50 per cent to 60 per cent of light falling on them as an average, and not less than 25 per cent.

Closely related to color is the provision for proper lighting of a work area. The colors chosen will have a bearing on the amount of artificial illumination needed; the type of lighting will determine the composition of the colors. In general offices it is important to use general illumination of fairly high intensity rather than to spot-light desks. Lack of contrast is especially important in drafting and art work, and uniformity in lighting is desirable throughout the building.

Both fluorescent and incandescent lighting are used in modern buildings. Fluorescent lighting costs less to operate and maintain, and new colors of elements now available make it possible to avoid the unnatural tones of earlier fluorescent fixtures. Incandescent lighting has advantages for precision work of sharply defined shadows. Careful study should be made of the best use of each type.

The location of lighting fixtures and the wiring diagram will depend upon the type of lighting. Incandescent lights (either indirect or semi-direct) distribute light in the shape of a cone so that they should be installed in centers with uniform spacing. Fluorescent lights (either direct or semi-direct) distribute the light in the form of a wedge so they should be installed in rows. In either case the spacing depends on the ceiling height, the type of fixture, and the level of illumination desired.

Heating in the new building is another important consideration. Baseboard and panel heating have been added to the more conventional steam radiators and convectors in distribution units. The fuel used will depend upon its availability and cost. Current trends are toward radiant ray heat which warms surfaces rather than the air. Steam radiators are now 40 per cent smaller and are more efficient, and cabinet and radiant front models as well as the free-standing styles are now used. Panel heating consists of pipes built into floors or ceilings of buildings during construction. Hot water forced through pipes heats the room without drying out furniture or floor coverings and without cracking the plaster.

Air-conditioning equipment is included in most city halls built since 1945. In most cases air-conditioning is provided for the entire building or for those offices frequented by the public. Drafting offices, machine rooms, and other areas where doors often are kept closed are sometimes air-conditioned even when the rest of the building is not. Air-conditioning and ventilating equipment costs less and is more easily provided for if it is planned and installed while the building is being constructed. Both elevators and ventilating equipment are more difficult to install and cost more if they are not included in the original plans.

Selecting the Architect. Direct appointment of an architect after inquiring into his training, background, and experience is the best method of selection. Rules of the American Institute of Architects specifically prohibit members from taking part in competitive bidding on professional fees. As an aid to selection, several architects may be invited to submit statements of their training and qualifications including a list and photographs of city halls and related public buildings which they have erected. References from those for whom the architect has designed buildings also may be requested. Actual selection should rest upon: (1) actual experience in designing and erecting large buildings; (2) evidence of technical knowledge necessary; (3) evidence of executive ability and force to compel performance of contracts; and (4) honesty and integrity.

Selection by architectural competition is another method which may be used. However, this method requires an impartial jury to make the award. There is no guarantee that the winner has the necessary qualifications to construct a city hall or that the jury is sufficiently qualified to select the best possible solution to the city's problem. Both architects and administrators should avoid the controversy in design and layout which may result from this method.

After his selection, a formal written agreement should be made with the architect. Included in such an agreement would be a statement as to services to be performed, fees to be paid, special state and local building regulations, ownership of drawings, and the employment and method of payment of engineers and other consulting specialists.

The full professional service of the architect includes most of the following: (1) making preliminary studies of the problem with the results expressed in a written report or in sketches; (2) preparing working drawings, specifications, and detail drawings; (3) drafting forms of proposals and contracts, issuing certificates of payment, and keeping accounts; and (4) supervising the actual construction. A percentage of the construction cost and a fee-plus-cost plan are the two principal methods of payment to the architect. As a general guide, local chapters of the AIA have schedules of fees based on a percentage of the construction costs by size and type of building.

Complete architectural services usually cannot be expected for fees lower than those suggested by the AIA; they range from 6 to 10 per cent. Under the fee-plus-cost system the architect receives a stated amount for his work and is reimbursed for travelling expenses, amounts paid to engineers, and drafting and overhead expenses. More detailed information concerning both of these methods of payment, standard forms of agreement between the architect and the owner, suggestions on letting the contract for the building, and the conduct of architectural competition will be found in the "Handbook of Architectural Practice" (American Institute of Architects, 1741 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington 6, D. C. 1951. \$4).

Layout of Office Space

Building arrangement and departmental layout are the next steps in planning a city hall. It is helpful as a starting point to use the following check-list of departments, offices, special-purpose rooms, and service areas in analyzing interior building requirements:

1. Departments requiring constant contact with the general public and the collection or payment of money--for example, the finance department and tax collector.
2. Departments requiring contact with special classes of the public--for example, city-owned utilities, building permits, personnel, city planning, and city clerk.
3. Other departments including public works, recreation, police, fire, etc.
4. City council chamber and office space for use by the mayor and councilmen.
5. Offices for the chief administrator.
6. Court rooms.
7. Storage vaults and record rooms.
8. Locker rooms, rest rooms, janitor closets, public telephones, and space for heating, ventilating, plumbing, and electrical equipment.
9. "Circulating areas" for lobbies, corridors, elevators, and stairways.

The structure of the city government should be taken into consideration. The location of the city clerk's office will depend upon whether he is a council officer or a fiscal officer. In a commission-governed city separate offices may be needed for each member of the city commission.

The relationship of one room to another is important. No room exists by itself, and many of the problems of living in a building arise from the neglect of this fact. Departments related in function should be located near one another and consecutive operations planned in production line style. In most modern buildings emphasis is placed upon large, open work spaces with a minimum of private offices and corridor space. A lobby of excessive size adds to the cost of construction; it may become a public loitering area instead of a suitable entrance.

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Activities Housed in the City Hall. The size of the building and its interior arrangement will depend primarily on the number of activities it houses. One of the first considerations in determining building arrangement is a decision on which departments to house in the city hall.

As a general rule all or most municipal activities should have headquarters at one address. However, there may be situations where it is advisable to locate certain activities away from the city hall. Airports, hospitals, library, public works garages and shops, and police and fire departments are examples. If possible the administrative and clerical offices for these departments should be housed in the city hall. The engineering, inspection, and general and utility accounting and billing activities certainly could be placed in the city hall. The police department and municipal courts may be housed elsewhere if their activities interfere with the efficient operation of other municipal functions. When an activity is already adequately housed, it may be more economical to exclude it from the new building. On the other hand, temporary or rented buildings should be abandoned in favor of a permanent, municipally owned building.

The provision of space for other governmental agencies depends upon the local situation. If no other office space is available, it may be well for such agencies to have office space in the city hall. Future expansion may be provided for in this way with the office space not currently needed for municipal activities rented out to other agencies. On the other hand, problems may arise from such a policy. The activities of these agencies may not be related specifically to the city government, and they may even interfere with efficient operation of city departments.

The use of the city hall by quasi-public and civic groups also raises problems: maintenance, provision for extra parking space, provision for public toilets, and control of improper conduct. Once established in the city hall, such agencies may be difficult to move out when space is needed for municipal activities. The question as to which agencies will be housed in the city hall may lead to political squabbles and considerable local controversy, especially when several worthy agencies need space.

Building Arrangement. As a general rule the activities which have most contact with the public should be located on the lower floors. In both the Boulder and Fresno city halls the finance activities are consolidated in one office and located just inside the front door. In the Fresno building the water department (including machine accounting, collections, administration, and drafting) is also on the first floor. In both the Fresno and Boulder buildings a large public lobby is in the center of the building with offices opening off to either end. The city clerk in both cities has an office in the finance wing. In most of the cities surveyed finance activities are located on the first floor near the main entrance.

The second floor of the Fresno building houses the public works department and the council chamber. In larger cities where a third story may be necessary, miscellaneous functions of the various departments would be located on the upper floor. Drafting rooms, conference rooms, and offices which do not involve numerous public contacts may be located there. If the police department is located in the city hall a portion of this floor could be used for the jail and court rooms.

Provision for a full basement housing general offices is not often made in new city office buildings. Most professional organizations advise against locating general offices in the basement. The Boulder building has no basement and the same is true of several California city buildings. In the Richmond, Calif., city hall the basement is used for storage and files. The basement may also house the building service activities: duplicating, supplies, receiving and shipping rooms, central switchboard, heating and air-conditioning equipment, and some vault space.

Chief Administrator's Office. The location of the chief administrator's office is important to good public relations. It should be located so as to give the impression of being easily reached and open to any caller, but should not be too prominent. The second floor ordinarily is a good location since some effort must be expended to visit it, and the casual or merely curious individual is less likely to intrude.

A first floor location, however, can be just as good if callers are properly screened by a secretary or receptionist. It has the additional advantage of being close to the offices most frequented by the public. In 21 of the cities surveyed the city hall is of two or more stories. The chief administrator is located on the first floor in nine cities and on the second floor in nine others. He is located on the third floor in two cities and on the 29th floor in Kansas City. In 10 cities the city hall is a one-story building.

The administrator's office should be large enough for meetings of department heads unless a conference room adjoins his office. A large conference table which will accommodate up to 12 people is desirable. Space should be provided adjacent to the administrator's office for a secretary and one or more assistants, depending upon the size of the city. The secretary's office would also serve as a reception room for people who call on the administrator.

Departmental Layout. After the activities to be housed have been arranged in relation to one another, attention can be given to the layout of individual departmental areas. Each department presents special problems which must be solved. Departmental layout will depend upon the type of activity carried on by the department and the tools or special equipment used. For example, a financial department layout may require an open area for accounting clerks and collectors with one or two private offices, a machine room, and a vault. The public works department, on the other hand, may require private offices for the director, the engineer, and individual inspectors, a drafting room, a vault, a plan or map room, and conference rooms.

The first step in departmental layout is to survey the work done by the department. Work flow should be especially studied. A complete list should be made of all employees and equipment to occupy the space. The possibility of future expansion should be anticipated and provision made for additional personnel. Provision also should be made for peak rather than average work loads. Flow of work should, as nearly as practicable, be in a straight line. Normally, work should come to the employees rather than they go to it. Minor activities can be grouped around areas of major activity.

A rough layout of the space to be occupied should then be prepared. All windows, doors, support columns and other construction features should be included. A scale of one-eighth inch to one foot is preferable. Templates of equipment should be made to scale to go in the space. Include all desks, files, chairs, typewriters, and other office machines. The finished layout should show the location of each piece of equipment and connections for electrical outlets and telephones. Partitions should then be drawn and private offices planned.

In any given department all employees should face in the same direction with the natural light coming over the left shoulder or from the back. Where employees are placed back to back, it is well to leave at least four feet between chairs. Office machinery should be spaced similarly. Aisles should be from five to eight feet for circulating aisles and three to five for less important ones. Desks should be at least 18 inches apart with a three foot aisle behind them. Desks of supervisors should be placed where they can maintain adequate supervision over their departments.

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Various standards of space requirement for office equipment are available. The pamphlet "Office Standards and Planning Book," published by the Art Metal Construction Company, Jamestown, New York, gives standards as well as hints on planning office layout. Another, entitled "Office Planning and Layout" by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York City, includes a discussion of space requirements, forms for use in determining departmental layout, suggestions on use of templates and symbols, and a bibliography.

Private Offices. A major factor in the determination of space needs for the various departments is the question of who should get private offices and under what circumstances. Generally speaking, more space is required for private offices. Space utilization is restricted through the segregation of areas for private offices and considerable expense is involved in rearranging and re-erecting the necessary partitions. Ventilation, lighting, and heating problems are complicated by a number of small offices; supervision and coordination of work, flow of work, and communications are made more difficult. An open, well-arranged office has a more orderly and business-like appearance than a series of small offices.

On the other hand, transactions of a confidential nature require private facilities. Privacy is often desirable not so much because of the confidential nature of the work, but because of the number of persons interviewed or because the work is of an independent nature which requires more quiet and privacy than the open office will allow. The tendency is distinctly away from private offices except where these conditions prevail.

General conference rooms where confidential meetings may be held as occasion demands may reduce the need for private offices. The impression of privacy without the disadvantages of private offices may be effected by the use of railings. Half partitions of wood topped with clear or frosted glass give the occupant a degree of privacy and still do not cut the general office off from light or air. In the cities surveyed, the individuals with private offices in the city hall are department and division heads: chief administrator, finance officer, personnel director, purchasing agent, health officer, police chief, building inspector, utility superintendent, and public works director.

Council Meeting Room. The council meeting room should be carefully planned if full use is to be made of it. Location of the council chamber is important because of the public nature of the business transacted there. Most of the cities with multi-storied buildings have located their council room on the second floor (12 cities) or first floor (8 cities). In five of the cities surveyed the council chamber is on the third floor.

The offices located near or around the council chamber are usually those of the city clerk, city attorney, and city manager. Committee hearing rooms and an office for the mayor and councilmen and for the civil service commission may be located nearby. Among the other agencies that may use the council room is the office of the city judge.

Nine of the 34 cities have some kind of amplifying equipment for the use of councilmen and the public. The city halls built since 1945 are more likely than the older buildings to include such equipment in the council room.

In a large measure the size of the room is determined by the number of citizens provided for. In the cities surveyed, space for the public ranges from 10 to 300. One-half of the cities provide space for between 50 to 140 citizens. Newer buildings tend to provide more seating room for the public. Boulder, Colo., and Richmond, Calif., for example, have space in the council room for 150.

In most cities surveyed, councilmen sit at separate desks or at a semi-circular table, the open end of which faces the citizens. In only two cities do the councilmen have their backs to the public. The mayor most often sits in the center flanked by the manager, clerk, and attorney. The council table often is put on a dias 18 inches or two feet above the main floor.

It is well to plan the council chamber so that it also can be used for other purposes. In many cities it is used as a general court room for public hearings held by city agencies, as a meeting room for the city planning or zoning commission, for general conferences, or as a public meeting room. In one city the social security area agent uses the room in his periodic visits to the city. Training activities also may be carried on in the city council chambers. (See Public Management, April, 1949, pp. 106-109, for a review of the arrangement and use of the council meeting rooms in 20 cities over 100,000).

Finance Activities. The collection activities of the finance department have more contact with the public than any other municipal activity with the possible exception of the police and building departments. A prominent location near the front entrance is therefore desirable. The avoidance of cubby-holes for separate functions and the provision for a large work area enhances the appearance of the building and gives the impression of a well-planned and efficient layout. Collection functions should be located near the public counter with billing, assessing, accounting, budgeting, and purchasing at a greater distance. These activities should be so grouped and arranged that the supervisor can observe the work of all his employees.

Private offices for the director, his secretary, and the purchasing agent may be located along one wall. Attention should be given to the proper location of private offices so that they do not cut off the general office from light and air. A separate, sound-proofed machine room should be provided where machines are used in accounting or billing. Acoustical ceilings and walls, thermopane glass partitions, and carpeted floors will absorb much of the machine noise and make for more efficient working conditions in the general office.

Police Department. The police department should be basically planned for the separation of criminal and public activities. Many citizens who visit the police department seek information or special permits or pay traffic fines. Separation is important for security reasons as well as to protect private citizens from drunks and other obnoxious police characters.

In Santa Cruz the city hall is arranged in a U-shape with three separate units. The police department is located in the central unit (see the supplement to this report). A wall separates the administrative offices and council chamber from the police department. The police have a private entrance and driveway at the rear of the building. The general public can get into the investigation and cell block area only by going through the chief's private office, which opens off the lobby, or over the counter. In Boulder the desk sergeant's counter opens directly into the public lobby. A waiting room with a reception desk is included for those who have business in other parts of the department. Here, too, a private entrance is provided to keep prisoners separate from the general public.

Records, identification, and communications sections should be located near each other with the detective divisions close at hand. Movement of prisoners into the building should be arranged so as to afford the greatest possible security. Therefore the booking area, fingerprinting, mugging, property room and show-up room should be located as near as possible to the cell block and the prisoner entrance. In the Boulder building these activities are conveniently grouped adjacent to the second floor cell block.

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In the cell block itself provision should be made for segregation of juveniles and men and women prisoners. The police matron, the kitchen, and toilets for the use of the prisoners should be located close by. It may also be possible as in Boulder to provide a private entrance into the courtroom directly from the cells or bull pen.

A squad or day room should be provided and screened from the public. It should be located adjacent to the records and identification sections since it will be used primarily for roll-call, writing reports, checking records, and other necessary activities. Provision of a room where these activities can be carried out away from public view guard against a public attitude that the police are lounging around the station.

Other Departments. The layout of other departments, such as public works, recreation, health, fire, and libraries will depend upon the functions of those departments in the individual city. Many cities, for example, do not have extensive recreation departments, and it may be necessary to provide only office space for a part-time director. In some cases the health department is a combined city-county unit and may be located in the city hall, in the court house, or in a separate building.

Even when the fire department is located on the same lot with the city hall it usually is in a separate building. The booklet, "Fire Station Design", contains a number of sketches of actual fire department design as well as articles describing the important features (by the Circul-Air Corporation, 575 East Milwaukee, Detroit 2). The American Library Association (50 East Huron Street, Chicago 11), has developed specifications and model layouts for library buildings in different size cities. The city halls in Boulder and Richmond have good layouts for a public works department and show how different activities can be combined in a single area.

The layout of the police traffic division is an important part of police department design, especially in larger cities. The Northwestern University Traffic Institute reports that the following cities are known to have a good office layout for the traffic division: Birmingham and Montgomery, Ala.; Richmond, San Diego, and Stockton, Calif.; Denver, Colo.; Evanston, Ill.; Fitchburg, Mass.; Knoxville, Tenn.; and Seattle and Yakima, Wash.

According to the American Public Health Association the following cities have a well laid out health department: Birmingham, Ala.; Little Rock, Ark.; Long Beach and San Jose, Calif.; St. Petersburg, Fla.; Peoria, Ill.; Shreveport, La.; Portland, Me.; Brookline, Mass.; Kalamazoo, Mich.; Kansas City, Mo.; East Orange, N. J.; and Tulsa, Okla.

According to the National Recreation Association the following cities have a well laid out recreation department: Little Rock, Ark.; Rock Island, Ill.; Fort Wayne, Ind.; Baton Rouge and Lake Charles, La.; Detroit and Pontiac, Mich.; East Orange, Elizabeth, Irvington, and Newark, N. J.; Albuquerque, N. M.; Charlotte and Durham, N. C.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Oklahoma City, Okla.; York, Pa.; Chattanooga, Tenn.; Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston, Tex.; Richmond, Va.; Charleston, W. Va.; and Appleton and Green Bay, Wis.

Layout of Typical City Halls

The layout of four city halls is described below, and front elevations and floor plans for three of these buildings are shown in the supplement to this report. The three buildings shown reflect natural variations in governmental activities, climatic conditions, and local building materials. In other words they express function and structure. The front elevations of these city halls are shown only as an aid to understanding the floor plans. These buildings, good as they are, are not "models" to be copied. Each city hall is a separate architectural problem.

Boulder, Colo. (19,999), in July, 1952, completed a \$250,000 two-story city hall. The building is of reinforced architectural concrete with an exterior of native stone. It has about 12,500 square feet of floor space. It is located two blocks from the main business intersection and across the street from a park. The site is part of a planned civic center.

The finance department, the recreation director's office, and the manager's office are in one wing of the first floor and the police department is in the other wing. Large open work areas are provided for both the finance and police departments and there is a separate machine room for the finance department. The boiler room is in one corner of the police wing since the building has no basement. The police department is so arranged that traffic violators and the general public do not come into contact with police characters.

The combined city council and court chamber is located in the center of the second floor. The council room seats 150 people and is wired for amplification. The council sits in a semi-circle on a raised platform facing the citizens. Public rest rooms are located on either side of the council room.

The jail is in the wing over the police department and has separate cells for women and juveniles. Offices for the judge and the city attorney, an identification room, the police dark room and a large conference room are also in this wing. A private stairway connects the police department on the first floor with the jail on the second.

The public works department is in the other wing of the second floor. A large drafting room and offices for the director, engineer, building inspector, planning director, and public works supervisors are provided. The purchasing agent has office space in this wing, and his clerk also serves as receptionist for the public works officials.

Stairways to the second floor are located in the main lobby and at the south entrance (finance wing). Toilets for employees are on the second floor. Two fire-proof vaults are included in the plan: one opening off the finance office and the second, just above, opening off the engineering drafting room.

Fresno, Calif. (91,669) --not shown in supplement), completed its city hall in 1944. An open two-story lobby serves as the public entrance with wings extending from both sides to provide space for city departments. Ramps instead of stairways are used in the lobby from the first to the second floor and for the public entrance to the building. Stairways are provided at the end of each wing.

One wing of the first floor contains offices for the finance department and the city clerk, and the other houses the department of water and waste disposal. One wing of the second floor contains the department of public works with private offices, open work space, and a large drafting room, and the city planning department. The other second-floor wing has the mayor's office, the city council chamber, civil service, personnel and recreation offices, and conference rooms. Each department is separated from the rest of the building by permanent concrete partitions. Within each department, partitions consist of light wood or metal panels that can be moved with minimum work and expense. For a more detailed description and photographs of the Fresno city hall, see "The Architectural Forum", June, 1944, pp. 67-78.

Santa Cruz, Calif. (21,980) built its city hall in 1939. It is of reinforced concrete with a plaster exterior finish. The building is U-shaped with three separate units and can be expanded by extension of one wing or by adding a second story over the central unit.

The south unit of the building houses the engineering, street, and sanitary departments, and the purchasing agent. Two public entrances are provided with the engineering and street departments sharing one reception room and the purchasing agent, and sanitary departments sharing another. The central unit includes the manager's office, combined council and court room, judge's chambers, and parking meter repair department. The police department is in the north end of this unit, separated by a wall from the council chambers. The north unit includes the city clerk and collector with a long public counter and open work space. A large vault is in one end of the unit and the water department billing, drafting, and superintendent's office in the other end.

The layout of the police department area illustrates many of the principles of good police layout. Prisoners are brought into the building from the driveway at the rear and taken to the record room for booking, mugging and finger printing. They are then taken across the hall to the cell block. If show-up is necessary they can be taken from the cell block direct to the interrogation room. The occasional police visitor does not come into contact with prisoners. The chief's office is located adjacent to the public lobby and is readily accessible to other police activities. Prisoners may be segregated in the cellblock when necessary. The assistant chief's office, the detective room, and the juvenile officer's office may be used for interrogation in case of need. A separate day room is provided, away from public view, where officers can write reports, check records, receive assignments, and report for duty.

Richmond, Calif. (99,545), located its city hall built in 1949 in a newly developed civic center. The building is of reinforced concrete and finished with red brick with a large amount of window area. The city hall is a three-story building with a full basement. The ground floor is an arcaded breezeway with lobbies to the upper floors.

The finance and public works departments are located on the second floor. The manager's office, council room, clerk's office, and health department are on the third floor. In departments frequented by the public, open counters and large work areas are provided. An elevator connects all floors with the basement and the ground floor lobby. Private offices are provided for all department heads and for some division heads. Conference and meeting rooms are included on the third floor.

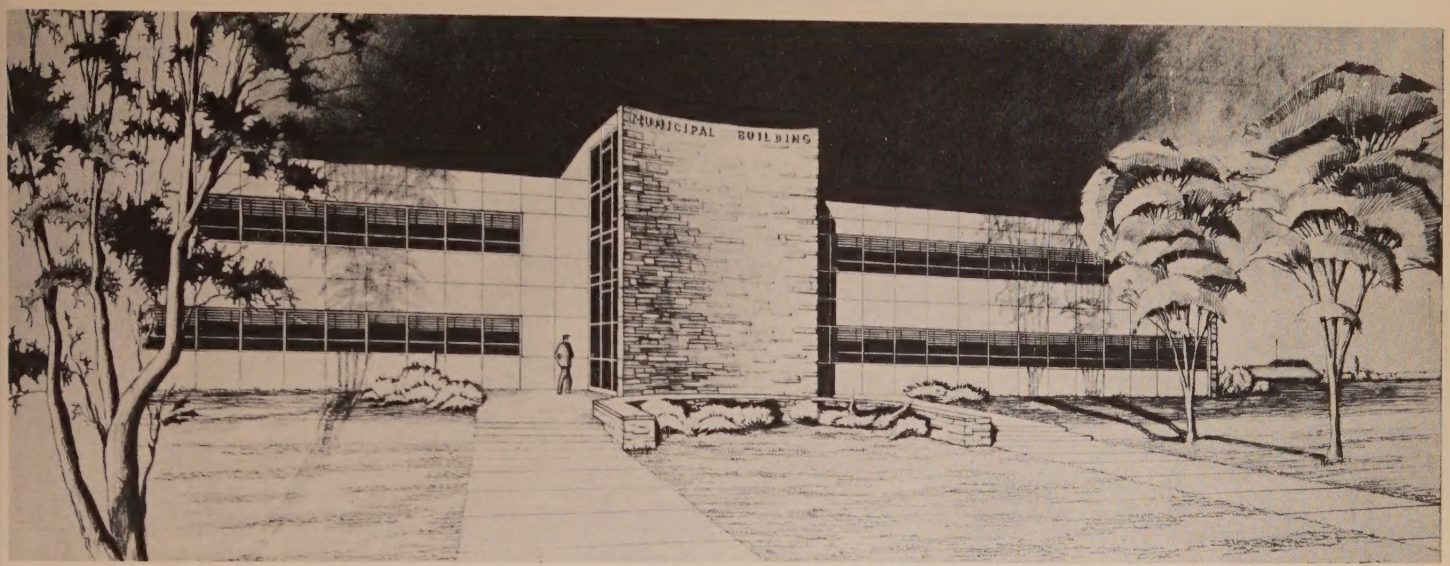
Fire department administrative offices, the police department and the city court are located in a separate three-story building. Principal police and fire offices are on the first floor and the city jail, courtroom, and district attorney's office are on the second floor. The police gymnasium and class rooms are on the third floor. A boiler plant serving the entire building is in the basement.

Note: Loan copies of plans and sketches of selected city halls are available on request to MIS subscribers. A brief bibliography on city hall planning and layout also is available on request. MIS also has compiled and will supply on request a list of cities which have built new city halls during the past 20 years.

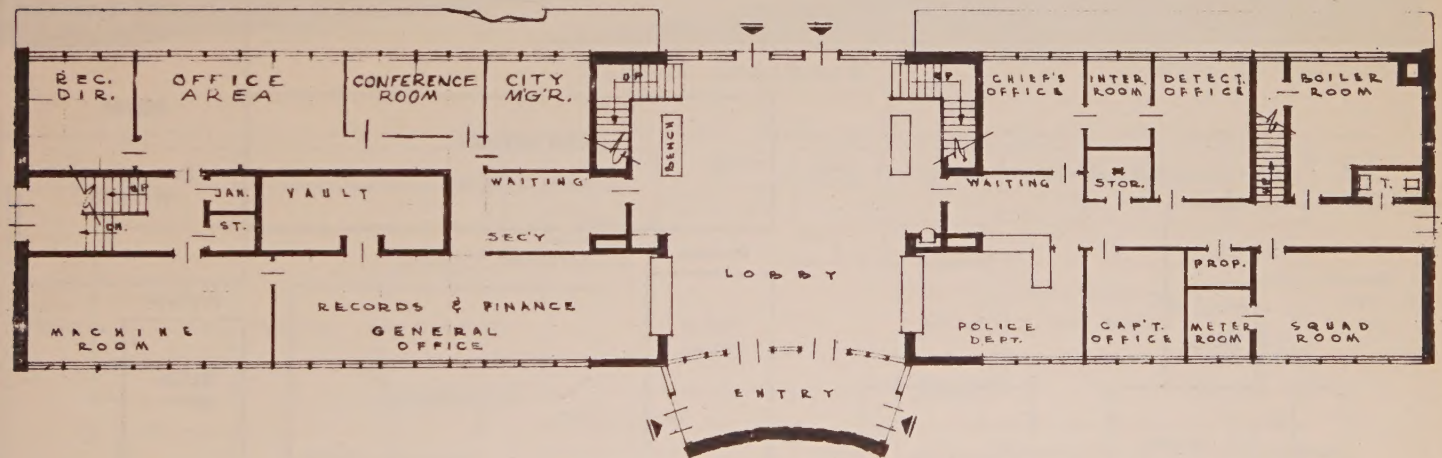
Grateful acknowledgment is made to the city officials and other persons who reviewed a tentative draft of this report and made many useful suggestions: Walter A. Taylor, director, department of education and research, American Institute of Architects, Washington, D. C.; James M. Hunter, architect, Boulder, Colo.; Bert W. Johnson, city manager, Boulder, Colo.; William E. Finley, assistant planning director, and Wayne E. Thompson, city manager, Richmond, Calif.; and R. N. Klein, city manager, Santa Cruz, Calif.

CITY HALL - Boulder, Colorado

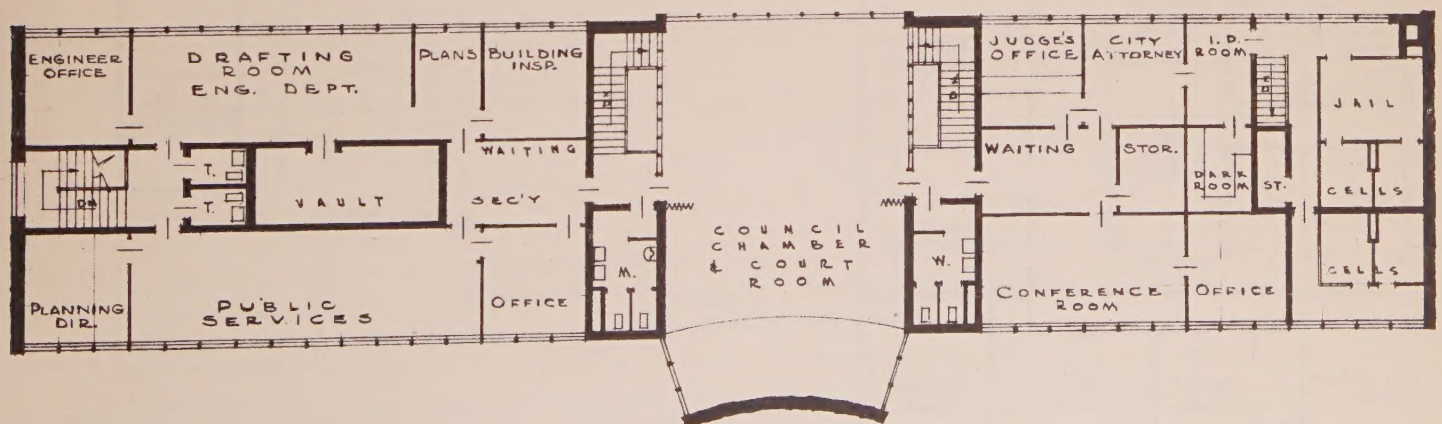
James M. Hunter, Architect



Sketch of Front Entrance



First Floor Plan



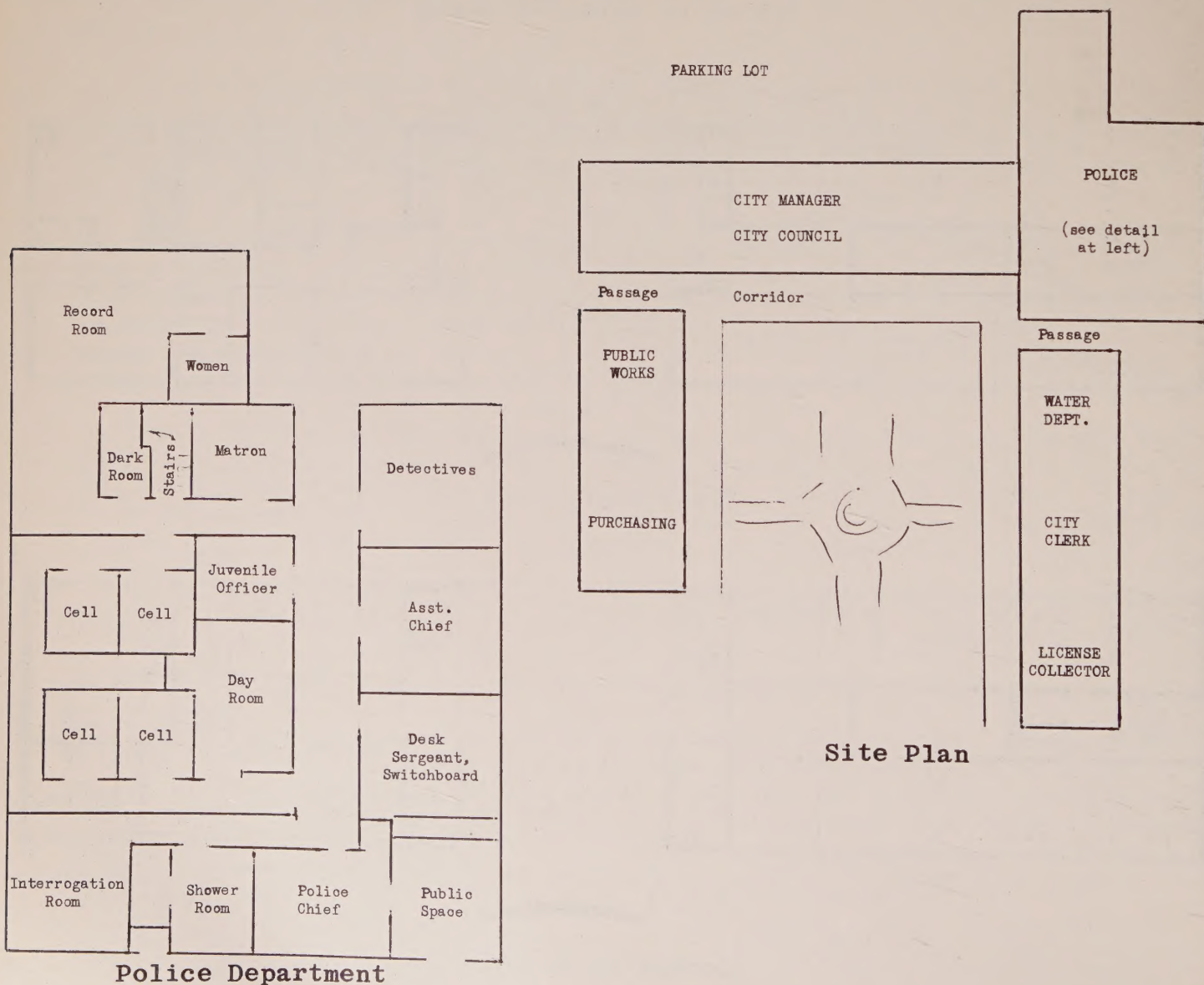
Second Floor Plan

CITY HALL - Santa Cruz, California

C. J. Ryland, Architect



Front Entrance

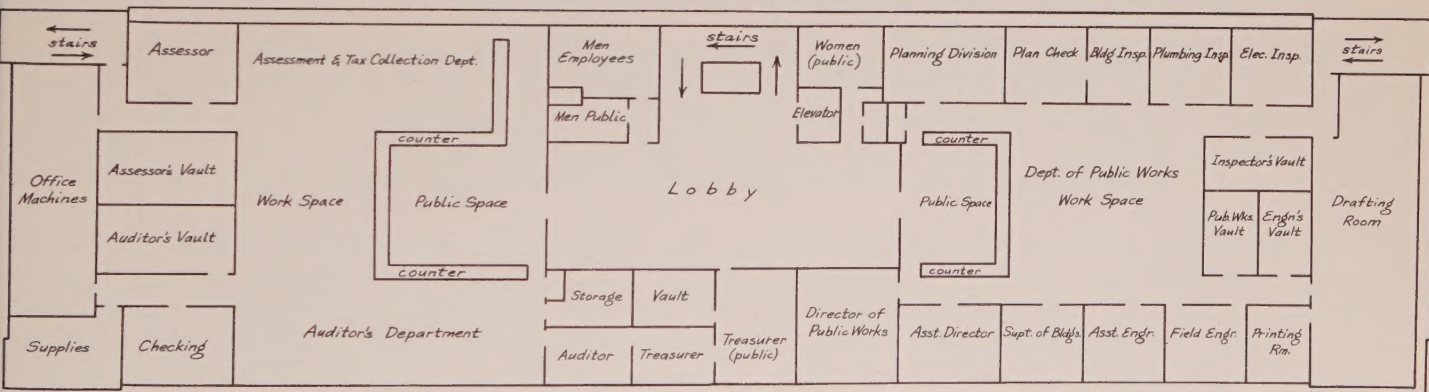


CITY HALL - Richmond, California
 Milton T. Pfleuger and Timothy L. Pfleuger, Architects

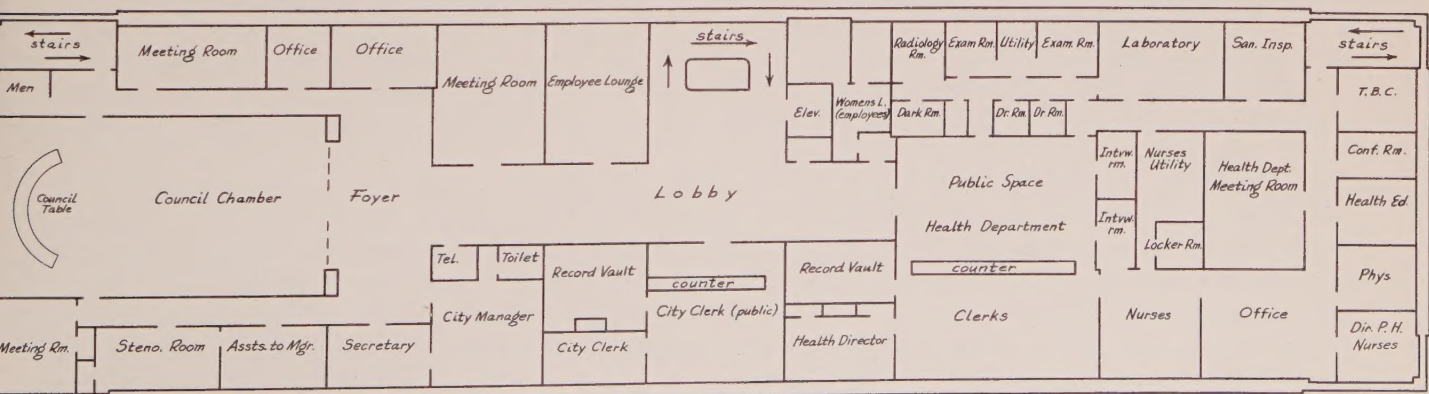


Street Entrance

Photo by Phil Fein



Second Floor Plan



Third Floor Plan

